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House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LARSEN of Washington).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 17, 2008.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RICK LARSEN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

CLEMMONS ROTARY CLUB CREATES INNOVATIVE PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to praise the critical community service being performed by the Rotary Club of Clemmons, North Carolina.

The Clemmons Rotary Club launched a unique initiative this year to boost awareness of organ and tissue donor programs in North Carolina. They have spruced up the sides of about a dozen semi-truck trailers with huge public service ads, calling attention to the constant need for organ donors in North Carolina. Each truck highlights organ donor programs in North Carolina and directs potential donors to visit www.DonateLifeNC.org.

Currently, about 3,000 people in North Carolina are awaiting life-saving organ transplants. The Clemmons Rotary's Billboards on Wheels program is going to improve the lives of these people in need of an organ transplant in North Carolina. In fact, this brilliant marketing idea is beginning to garner some national attention from other rotary clubs that would like to replicate this program in States other than North Carolina.

The trend-setting people of the rotary club are model citizens who are working to make our world a healthier and more livable place. I hope that their good deeds inspire others to take up this great outreach idea and to help match donors with those in need.

Mr. Speaker, today, I also want to call special attention to the innovation and hard work of the students involved in West Wilkes High School's electric vehicle program.

Under the guidance and direction of Advisor Chris Tolbert, students in the West Wilkes electric vehicle program have completely rebuilt two vehicles—a Ford pickup and a Mazda Miata—into fully functional electric cars. This award-winning electric vehicle program is exactly the sort of program we need to help teach young people the skills and technology of the future.

I applaud Mr. Tolbert and the students at West Wilkes for their forward-thinking mindset. These students have custom-built electric cars, cars without gas engines, from the ground up. This is a herculean accomplishment with more than 3,000 hours of hard work going into the design and building of the Mazda Miata alone.

Fortunately, their hard work is paying dividends. Not only are they investing in a cleaner environment and in an economy that is less dependent on gas and oil, but they have brought home many awards and have captured national attention for their electric car innovations.

Just last month, they won multiple awards at the SMARTT Challenge competition in Raleigh. The SMARTT electric vehicle challenge, which draws hundreds of students from across the southeast, stands for Students Making Advancements in Renewable Transportation Technology.

The students and teachers at West Wilkes High School are on the cutting edge of hands-on instruction and learning, and I congratulate them for maintaining one of the best high school electric vehicle programs in the Nation. I hope they'll keep up the good work.

This leads me into my next comments, Mr. Speaker. The Democrats are inventing false arguments again.

"Use it or lose it" is already the law.

For Federal onshore competitive oil and gas leases, an oil company must have a producing well by 10 years. This comes from section 17(e) of the Mineral Leasing Act, (source: 30 U.S.C. 226(e)). Prior to 1992, the lease term was 5 years. The Energy Policy Act of 1992, under a Democrat House, modified it to 10 years. For Federal offshore oil and gas leases, an oil company must produce energy between 5 and 10 years. This is from the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.

So House Democrats do not even know what is existing law. What Democrats would have you believe is that a lease is a license to produce oil and gas. It is not. A lease is only the start of a process involving several steps the government requires an oil company to take before it may get permission to drill.

Democrats are effectively arguing that we should pull leases away from oil companies before they even receive permission to drill. That's like saying we should flunk a first grader on his first day of school because he has not yet taken his final exam.

Most of the drilling on Federal leases has been for natural gas. Natural gas

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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production was up, way up last year, and so was demand. In fact, the industry is producing more gas under these leases, but they cannot keep up with demand because Democrats and their radical environmental allies will not allow the leasing of new areas. Ninety-seven percent of Federal offshore areas are not leased. Ninety-four percent of Federal onshore areas are not leased.

Again, I say, Mr. Speaker, the Democrats are inventing false arguments to keep us from increasing our supply of energy in this country.

LOWER GAS AND ENERGY PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I want to take just a moment, before I start with any of my energy remarks, to welcome President Chen, Joy and Sean Chen here with General Protecht that is opening up a business in my district in Barnesville, Georgia. It's great to have them visiting Washington, D.C.

What I really want to talk to the people about today, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that it is time that the American people understand where Congress is on providing them with our own resources to bring about lower gas prices and lower energy prices.

I have had several constituents and people e-mailing me and calling me, asking me about a number of petitions that were on the Web or that were in service stations or in Wal-Marts or in Home Depots, and they were wanting to know how I felt about drilling onshore, about drilling in deep water and about bringing more refineries on line.

So, as I looked at some of these petitions—and some of them I saw—one was on American solutions, and there were others, but the one on American solutions had about 600,000 signatories. Six hundred thousand Americans had taken the time to go to that Web site to sign the petition that said, "Drill now. Drill here. Less price." Less gasoline price.

So I thought, you know, that's interesting because we know how these constituents feel, but do our constituents really know, Mr. Speaker, how Members of Congress feel? Because we do things up here to keep the American people from knowing exactly what we do think because we make these issues as to so many different subject matters that we can find excuses to vote for or against most any proposal that is brought to this floor. So what I want to do is simplify it, simplify it for the American people—for our constituents—and, Mr. Speaker, for the Members of Congress.

So I came up with a petition for this House of Representatives, and the petition is simple. The petition says: "American energy solutions for lower gas prices. Bring onshore oil on line. Bring deep water oil on line, and bring new refineries on line."

I've got a petition here. Don't worry. This is one board. We've got five boards. We've got every district, all 435 Members who can vote in this House. We've got a petition, and it says, "I will vote to increase U.S. oil production to lower gas prices for Americans." How simple is that? That's pretty simple.

So what we've done is we've got this. Congressman PRICE and myself didn't bring it out until, really, after everybody had kind of gone home up here last Thursday, and we've already gotten 20 signatories. I've got two pens that I'm going to attach to these petitions. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to put them over here by the back door here on the minority side, and I'm going to invite every Member of Congress who believes that they would vote to reduce these prices to come by and sign them.

Just to give the American people, Mr. Speaker, a way to look at this, we are going to post, and are going to try to post in as real a time as we can, on different Web pages who has signed it. So, if you want to know who has signed so far, you can go to House.gov/Westmoreland, and you can also go to GOP.gov/energy. Now, these are two Web sites that are going to have posted by the end of the day who all has signed. If you, Mr. Speaker, or if anybody out there might want to know if your Congressman has signed, then you can go to that Web site.

We have had all different types of arguments in this House about energy, and the Democrats had an energy bill that they proposed and actually passed that President Bush signed into law in December of 2007. The Democratic majority passed this as one of their big issues in January of 2007.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. With that, I'll leave it up to Mr. PRICE, but for every Member in this House, the pens are here; the petition is here. Let the American people know how you feel.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) for 2 minutes.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, just last month, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the creation of the State of Israel.

Last year, I was privileged to take my first trip to the Promised Land. Israel is the birthright for Jews around the world. As our staunchest ally, Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East, but to Jews, it is much more. It is the homeland, the true community that my own Jewish ancestors dreamed of when hounded by anti-Semitism, repression and violence.

To truly honor Israel on this 60th anniversary, we must seek a true, lasting peace from committed partners to provide for Israel's long-term survival, se-

curity and prosperity. For Jews in America, we owe it to our ancestors to protect the Jewish homeland that they toiled for centuries to achieve. We owe to it our grandparents and to our great grandparents who never saw the Promised Land. We owe it to our children and to our grandchildren, who must always know a world with a Jewish homeland. We owe them peace in our time.

RISING GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to come to the well of the House and address this body. It's Tuesday, about 16 minutes to 1 o'clock, and the House is back in session for another week.

Today, we are going to be taking up some interesting resolutions. H.R. 1002 expresses support for the designation of April 2008 as Public Radio Recognition Month. We are going to take up House Resolution 1029, which congratulates and recognizes Chi-Chi Rodriguez for his continued success on and off the golf course. We are going to rename a post office in Cleveland, Ohio. We are going to rename another post office in Rancho Mirage, California, and we are going to recognize or have a bill that recognizes the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day. That's what is on tap for the House of Representatives today, Mr. Speaker.

What aren't we going to do?

Well, we aren't going to do what my constituents in the Sixth District of Georgia want us to do and what Americans all across this Nation want us to do, and that is to deal with the issue of gas prices, of rising gas prices. For another week, we're not going to deal with that because the leadership in this House, the Democrat leadership in this House, will not allow the bills to come to the floor that will increase American energy for Americans.

The average gas price in this Nation today, Mr. Speaker, is \$4.08 a gallon. In California, it's \$4.60 a gallon. In Connecticut, it's \$4.38 a gallon. Now, facts are stubborn things, Mr. Speaker, but there are some laws of economics that are driving all of this.

Part of it, not all of it, is supply and demand, and there are some other facts that are important for all of us to appreciate. The United States expanded its dependence on foreign members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries—that's OPEC, Mr. Speaker—by a full 7 percent in 2007 alone. That means we increased our dependence on foreign oil. The United States is the only developed Nation in the world that forbids, that forbids, Mr. Speaker, safe energy production in its Outer Continental Shelf. That's deep sea exploration. We are the only developed Nation in the world to do this.

The U.S. Minerals Management Service estimates that America's Outer